

Northampton Mercury

THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 2014

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FOOD BANKS DEMAND IS CAUSE FOR CONCERN

MP FEARS TOO MANY APPLICANTS ARE NOW 'FREE-LOADERS'

The number of villagers requiring emergency stocks from a Northamptonshire food bank has soared according to a co-ordinator who fears food poverty is no longer just an urban issue.

Barbara Parfitt, of the Trussell Trust's Towcester branch, based at the Youth Coffee House in Bransons Lane, says there has been a marked increase in people living in affluent parts of the county who have turned to the service during the past year.

Across the East Midlands the trust has seen a 251 per cent rise in people using its services, which require recipients to first obtain a food 'voucher' following an assessment by one of a number of agencies.

Mrs Parfitt said: "Certainly over the last few months there have been more people using the food banks from the village

es than from the town itself.

"Maybe it is just that awareness is getting through to the villages, but it's also that times are hard for everybody."

According to the trust's statistics, more than 913,000 people received three days' emergency food from its banks in 2013-14, compared with 347,000 in 2012-13.

Mrs Parfitt said many of the people heading to the Towcester branch were struggling because there had been a delay in their benefit claims payments or they were in the process of changing to the Universal Credit scheme.

But she added there had been a worrying amount of recipients previously holding good jobs who could not afford to pay their food bills.

"We've seen people in really influential places who have fallen on hard times," she said.

"The misconception is that it's just people on benefits that

need access to the food, but it can be anyone."

Mrs Parfitt said that donations have also gone up to account for the demand.

But Brian Binley, MP for Northampton South, believes the Trussell Trust's figures were skewed by those making dishonest representations to get hold of food vouchers.

He said: "I have no issue with charity. My issue is that this increase comes at a time when the economy is getting better, it isn't a case of there being more and more poor people."

"It's partly because more and more people are free-loading."

"From a man of my background, that ain't how you live your life."

For information or advice on the Trussell Trust's Towcester food bank call 07724 832043.



The food bank in Towcester is being used by more people from outside the town

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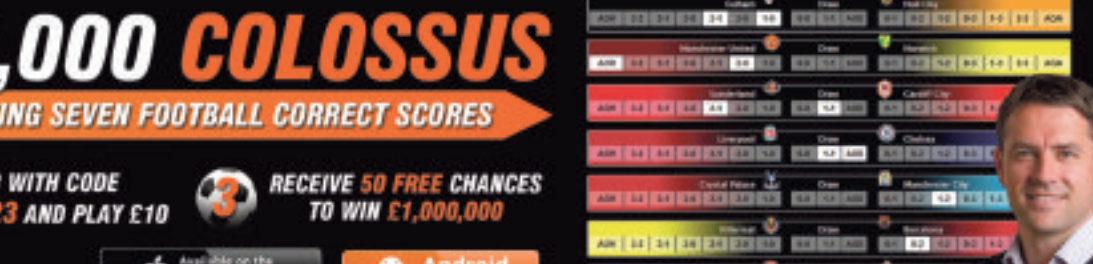
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CAR WRECKAGE Joanna Smith died after a car crash that was caused by vandals slashing the tyres of her vehicle. No-one has ever been caught

‘Wall of silence’ in manslaughter case

A husband is calling for someone to break a wall of silence which is stopping police finding those responsible for the crash which killed his wife.

John Smith heard the heart-breaking news on the eve of the second anniversary of wife Joanna's death that there was not enough evidence to prove who slashed the car tyres which caused the fatal crash.

Joanna, 32, died in the accident on the A45 near Earls Barton on the morning of April 10, 2012.

Her tyres had been deliberately damaged near her home in Grange Park, Northampton, along with three other vehicles, before she set off on her usual journey to work.

Police said the damaged tyres had failed, which caused the crash, but without more evidence, those to blame for her manslaughter may never be brought to justice.

Husband John, a former sports reporter for the *Northamptonshire Telegraph* in Kettering, said: "After two years, the hope of finding those responsible was fading, but you never say never."

"To hear the news was disappointing and it came at a difficult time, but I think the police have done all they can."

"It's going to come down to someone saying something."

Someone knows who did this, who is responsible, but they are fearful of reprisals. I don't think they realise what they have done to me and the family."

After two years of numerous police appeals and extensive investigations, officers told Mr Smith that while the tyres were damaged deliberately, they cannot say with which weapon or by who.

It is believed Joanna's car was randomly targeted, but Mr Smith fears a wall of silence has gone up so anyone who knows about what happened is staying tight-lipped for fear of retribution or being implicated in the crime.

He said: "Why anyone would do anything like this is beyond me, but it has massively spiralled out of control and now they are scared of being caught up in it. Just to know that someone has been found responsible for it would be some sort of closure."

Despite moving to Loughborough after his wife's death because he couldn't bear to continue living in their flat in Northampton, Mr Smith is still fighting for justice for his wife. He said: "Please come forward and please say something if you know anything because there's grieving parents and a twin sister in another country who just want this to be over."



“Someone knows what happened that night”

●● Speaking in 2013 on the first anniversary of her death, DCI Martin Kinchin said: "Although we do not believe the person who damaged Joanna's car set out to cause her death, their actions had a very serious outcome and her family deserves to know what happened."

"We believe someone knows who the offender is and would ask them to think about the impact Joanna's death has had on her family and friends and to give us any information they have." Anyone with information can call police on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

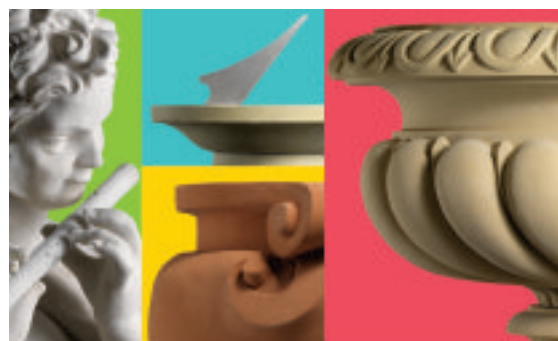
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Although nearly everyone suffers with occasional headaches, for about 20% of the population, these headaches are chronic or recurrent.

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Approximately 90% of headaches are related to the neck or muscles around the neck and head. Adults and children suffer headaches, and there are many types, but the three most common are cervicogenic, tension and migraine.

Tension headache Typical symptoms include pain in both sides of the head that is often described as tight, stiff and constricting. These often occur in conjunction with tight musculature around the neck region.

Cervicogenic headache is a form of headache usually resulting from the muscles and joints of the neck injury/trauma, poor posture and stress. Symptoms may include restricted movement of the neck with associated neck, shoulder and arm pain.

What does treatment involve?

Unlike painkillers, your chiropractor will **treat the cause** of the pain to prevent or reduce recurrence rather than just the symptoms. Chiropractic manipulation of the neck may be performed along with muscle relaxation, strengthening and stretching techniques. Self-help advice will also be provided.

Some patients enjoy almost immediate relief, whilst others notice a gradual easing of their symptoms over a period of several weeks. This will depend on the nature, and chronicity of the problem.



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Cage bird owners

A couple have issued a warning to other bird owners in Northampton after thieves stole a whole aviary full of canaries, sparrows and finches in an overnight raid.

Marion Minney, who lives in Irondale Close, Briar Hill, with her husband, Peter, believes an organised gang was behind the theft of 22 birds from the aviary by the side of her property.

The theft took place sometime between 7.30pm last Sunday night and 6am on Monday. Mrs Minney said: "Whoever committed the robbery knew what they were doing. They knocked over perches and used a net to catch all the birds."

"My husband, who is blind, really enjoyed the lovely singing by the canaries. We are pensioners and we love looking after them."

"We have had them since they were babies and some of them used to perch on your hand."

Mrs Minney said it was unlikely the birds, worth an estimated £500, would ever be found, but wanted to warn other bird owners they need to secure their aviaries. She said: "Looking after the birds

Bird thefts taking place across whole of the UK

●● A man who has set up a register of all the caged bird thefts in the UK has said he is getting phone calls from around the country almost every day. The National Theft Register, compiled by John Hayward, shows there was a collection of canaries stolen from a house in Northamp-

ton in October 2012. Mr Hayward said one of the biggest recent thefts was of 400 budgerigars from an aviary in Southampton, worth an estimated £60,000. If you would like to report a lost, found or stolen bird to this register, call 01869 325699.

is a hobby for us and we didn't lock them up. Many other elderly people keep birds and we want to warn them they could be targeted by this organised group."

John Hayward, who has compiled a National Bird Theft Register, said people needed to "seriously step up security" around their aviaries as there had been hundreds of bird thefts across the country in the past year.

Mr Hayward said: "For the past year or so we have been compiling a list of a number of thefts of small exhibition

birds which are occurring predominantly across the Midlands area. We suspect the majority of these thefts are being carried out by a specific team who are moving through the area and targeting aviaries and birdhouses."

Mr Hayward said some of the most exotic birds would fetch large amounts of money and it was suspected the stolen birds were being sold on to breeders in Europe.

Mr Hayward said: "The longer these thieves get away with it the longer they will persist."

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warned of thefts



LEFT DEVASTATED Marion Minney and her husband, Peter, in the now empty aviary at their home in Briar Hill which was targeted by thieves

Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

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that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done. We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole.'

Cloudy2Clear service the Northampton, Kettering, Wellingborough & Corby areas and Trevor is finding that his

approach is a major factor in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for,

which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Trevor a call for a free quotation on **0800 61 21 118** and he'll be happy to help!



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Grieving parents' bid to lower speeds refused

The parents of a teenager killed in a car accident have failed in a bid to have the speed limit lowered on the Northamptonshire road where she died.

Rebecca Taylor, aged 18, died in a car crash on the road between Blisworth and Milton Malsor in September 2008 while returning home from dropping her sister at school.

Her mum, Nicole, and dad, Chris, have been lobbying Northamptonshire County Council to lower the limit from 60mph to 40mph in a bid to ensure drivers do not have to deal with four successive changes in the speed limit between Milton Malsor Cemetery and Blisworth.

However, a council panel said three deaths in the last decade, including Rebecca's, were not reason enough to change the limit and thereby "divert funding away from more pressing measures".

Mrs Taylor said: "We truly believe it is all tied up in votes and money."

"Votes because it's not popular to restrict motorists, and



Rebecca Taylor died after a car crash between Blisworth and Milton Malsor

money because signs and the policing of a new speed limit is money nobody wants to spend."

She added: "I expect drivers reading our story will think reducing the speed limit would have inconvenienced

them. I would say to them they ought to try standing in our shoes. I can tell you as a mum who has lost her daughter that saving a few seconds – and that's all it is – is nothing compared to a lifetime without a loved one."

Chronicle & Echo
Northants Telegraph

education awards 2014



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Concern over plan for new solar farm



FLOOD FEARS A picture of how the farm might look

Flooding fears were rife as controversial plans for a solar farm at a Northamptonshire beauty spot went on display to the public for the first time.

The land at Kingsthorpe Meadows was the subject of an auction battle in 2008 between Councillor Iffy Choudary (Con, Abington), and residents' group NN2, which had raised £98,000 to turn the site into a nature reserve.

To their surprise, Councillor Choudary's daughter bought the land at the auction instead. The Conservative member has since drawn up a planning proposal with Green Switch Solutions to install a solar farm on his 28-acre site; the other 14-acre patch was handed over to the residents' group for £36,000 in 2009.

But some people living nearby believe installing thousands of two-metre high panels there will alter the

meadows' effectiveness as a flood plain for the River Nene, forcing a greater flow of water towards the town centre in rainy seasons.

Speaking at a consultation meeting on Wednesday, Alan Hames, of the Nene flood Prevention Alliance, said: "I think this is an appalling plan. That land is there to protect Northampton."

Assistant planner for Green Switch, John Hellowell, said measures could be put in place to mitigate the impact on the flood plain, including raising the panels up on rods to allow water to flow through.

The space between the panels, he said, could even allow the land to be used for sheep grazing.

He said: "The solar farm will provide energy at a peak output to 1,200 homes without removing prime agricultural land from usage."

Liberal Democrat borough

councillor for the Kingsthorpe area, Councillor Sally Beardsworth, said her concern about the farm would be the visual impact on 25 acres of picturesque meadow.

"People are very upset about this," she said. "No one is against solar panels but in the right place. That has been a beautiful natural meadow for years."

Company director Oliver Mackaness, 39, of Boughton Park, was one of the people who donated funds to NN2 to buy the land for use as a nature reserve in 2008.

He said: "It's so galling that this could become a solar farm now."

But Councillor Choudary said opposition members have used the solar farm as a 'political football' against him.

He said he was willing to have a public meeting about the plans if it helped to allay residents' concerns.

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Judges deliver blow to extradition appeal

A Northampton couple fear they could be extradited 'any day now' after they were told their case will not be heard at the Supreme Court.

Paul and Sandra Dunham are being pursued by the US Department of Justice over allegations they embezzled more than one million US dollars in illegitimate expenses, a claim they deny.

However extradition laws require the Dunhams to be flown over to the USA and kept in detention there for at least 12 weeks before their trial in what the High Court admitted could be harsh conditions.

Last Thursday they learned their appeal against extradition would not be heard in the Supreme Court.

Mr Dunham said: "The problem we have now is that we could be extradited any day now."

"All we know for sure is that this has to happen within the next 28 days, we'll be put on a plane and sent back to the US."



Paul and Sandra Dunham could face extradition within 28 days now.

Mr Dunham was chief executive, president and 20 per cent shareholder of PACE, a US company manufacturing soldering irons for the electronics industry.

Eric Siegel, the son of PACE founder, the late William Siegel, is pursuing the charges.

The couple have now written to the Home Office requesting that it allows them a further 14 days to make a 'rule 39' application to the European Court on Human Rights. Mr Dunham believes the British Government is doing all it can to protect the extradition laws with the US.

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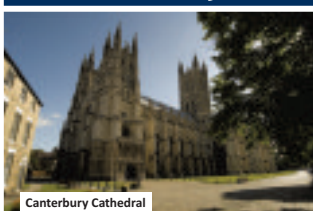
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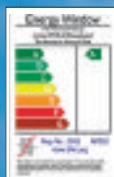
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Roads 'drive firms away'

Several businesses are looking to leave Brackmills industrial estate because of congestion levels around Northampton, a former council leader has claimed.

Ward councillor Phil Larratt (*Con, East Hunsbury*), said the issue will get much worse unless drastic traffic improvements are undertaken around the outskirts of the town.

Speaking at the second combined Housing Action Groups' meeting, focusing on plans for 26,000 new homes, Councillor Larratt, who worked at Brackmills until 2011, said: "I was promised by a minister when I was [council] leader in 2004 it would be infrastructure, infrastructure, infrastructure; those were his words.

"There's now a funding gap here of £400 million and that promise is clearly not happening.

"Why should all these homes be built without that money provided by ministers?"

Addressing a Highways Agency representative, he



ACTION GROUP Campaigners outside The Guildhall ahead of a meeting over proposed new housing

added: "All you're doing is tinkering at the edges, talking about improving junctions that are only going to delay and frustrate the people I represent.

"Asking people to shift

from cars to bicycles, as the Joint Planning Unit suggest, is an absolute farce.

"Some Brackmills businesses are already looking to move because they are even now incurring penalties from

people they are trying to deliver to.

"We are talking about the economic viability of Brackmills and firms there.

"Without hugely better roads, I fear for the future."

Wishlist decided by public this year

A LIST of infrastructure improvements that is likely to include priority schools, roads and health services for Northampton will be decided upon by the public.

The so-called Section 123 money is made up of contributions from developers of housing projects across the town and stored up by Northampton Borough Council.

Differing from Section 106 money, which is for specific facilities near a development, Section 123 money can be spent anywhere to improve the infrastructure of the town.

Sue Bridge, head of borough council planning, told the Housing Action Groups meeting: "In my opinion the 123 list needs to be kept very tight with only a handful of the biggest priorities on there.

"It will come forward for public consultation later this year."

Brackmills: 'We don't want delays'

●● The chairman of the Brackmills BID business group has expressed concern about the effect of 1,000 houses being planned for the surrounding villages.

●● Sara Homer said congestion now is just about manageable for most firms on the industrial estate, but developments at Wootton and Hardingstone could change that.

●● She said: "Generally, we aren't too bad, but if you slap 1,000 houses on the edge of Brackmills, with schools, doctors and the rest, we will inevitably become a cut-through.

●● "What we don't want is lorries being late and companies being penalised for it."

●● However, Mrs Homer said several mitigation measures were helping to ease current traffic problems.

●● For example, a bus service, which stops at CoNnect bicycle stations, which will be launched in June, will help encourage use of public transport.

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'Parked' bus snap spreads on social sites

Parking restrictions will not be imposed along a road in Delapre, Northamptonshire County Council has said, despite pictures circulating of a bus parked nose-first in a driveway to avoid oncoming traffic.

Snapshots of the number 10 Stagecoach service to Parklands began spreading on social media sites last Friday morning. Witnesses said the single decker bus was forced to swing into a residential parking area to allow another bus through on the narrow Gloucester Avenue. Residents there said jams often happened as lines of cars parked on the road near the pharmacy and Post Office.

But Northamptonshire County Council said its views had not been swayed by the photograph. "We've never had any problems reported to us about this bus route, which has been running for several years without



issues," a spokesperson said. "Bus drivers are usually very good at working together to ensure the routes run smoothly, even in tight areas such as a busy housing estate." Student Harry King, 25, saw the incident and praised the driver for his quick thinking. He said: "The road in some places is just not big enough for two large buses to pass each other. "I think most households have one or two cars, so there is just not enough space for all the vehicles in the area." A Stagecoach spokesman said the driver had to perform the manoeuvre "due to a significant volume of parked cars."

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Arthritic OAP's Alps cycle tour

A Northamptonshire pensioner with arthritis will be doing a six-week cycling tour of France before undergoing major knee surgery.

David Barker, aged 66, from Watford village, near Daventry, will embark on the tour, featuring Tour de France landmarks, next month.

He hopes to raise money for Arthritis Research UK and, as an arthritis sufferer, will be having knee-replacement surgery in August.

The keen sportsman said: "I used to run marathons, but cycling is easier on my joints and I might as well finish off the old knees before I get new ones."

Mr Barker will start on May 17 in Calais, cycle down the Atlantic coast towards the Spanish border, then across to the Mediterranean before tackling the Alps and back to Calais. The route will involve a total climb of more than three times the height of Mount Ev-

erest. Mr Barker said: "In preparation I've been cycling 200-300 miles a week and lost the same amount of weight as I will be carrying in gear."

"Some stages might get lonely but my wife, Moira, will fly out to visit halfway through."

Mr Barker also thanked his local Halfords for specially preparing his Trek mountain bike for the trip. People can support him at www.justgiving.com/Dave-Barker1



Cycling is ideal sport for arthritis sufferers

● Arthritis is a common condition causing pain and inflammation within joints. Around 10 million people of all ages are affected by it in the UK. Its exact cause is unknown but contributing factors include joint injury, age and obesity. While forms of arthritis can be aggravated

ed by high-impact sports, the World Arthritis Day organisation reports that low-impact sports like cycling, where body weight is mainly taken by the bicycle can bring various health benefits. While reducing strain on the hips and lower back, it can strengthen damaged muscles.

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Happy Chippy wins 'best in town' title

The golden, crispy chips of Duston Village Chippy have earned the shop the title of best in Northampton.

The Duston Village Chippy, in Main Road, Duston, received the most votes to be named the Northampton *Chronicle* & Echo Chip Shop of the Year 2014. They have been presented with a certificate to commemorate their success.

The contest was readers' chance to reveal their favourite chippy. Nominations created a shortlist of 17 shops, with Duston Village Chippy coming out on top after three weeks of voting.

Owner Yuen Wan said the

secret of the shop's success was their fresh ingredients and friendly service.

He said: "We've been doing this for 11 years and work very hard so we're really happy.

"We only use the top branded ingredients and everything is freshly prepared.

"We use Icelandic fish, which is frozen at sea to keep it fresh, and we use grade A potatoes.

"Cod and chips is definitely our most popular order, but we also sell a lot of kebabs.

"Lots of customers came in and said they voted for us. We always chat to customers and treat each of them as special.

"Everyone who comes in is treated as royalty."

A spokeswoman for our sister paper, the *Chron* said: "Thank you to everyone who voted and got in touch. We were overwhelmed by the response. Following the competition's success we will now be launching a Salon of the Year contest.

"For details on nominating your favourite hair/beauty salon pick up the *Chron* on Thursday, May 8."

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to make it a bit special in a car that costs from a modest £12,600.

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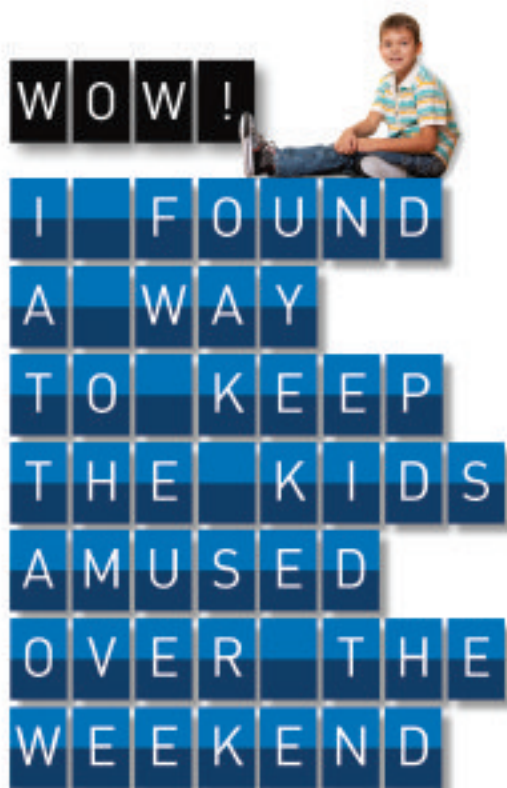
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GOOD NATURED Friendly, caring, young looking Rugby lady, 77, 5'10", enjoys walks, theatre, board games, days out, theatre, holidays, would like to meet a similar gent, to share happy times with. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 166417 or send a text to 80361



I'M READY FOR LOVE Friendly, reliable Rugby man, 30, 6'3", with GSOH, interested in art, photography and drumming, would like to meet a woman, with similar interests, for a long term relationship. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 149827 or send a text to 80361

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JUST LOOKING FOR ROMANCE Romantic, professional, handsome male, 59, N/5, own house, car and business, honest, tactile and lovely open personality, seeks a female, for long term relationship. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 158935 or send a text to 80361

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GET TOGETHER Divorced, natural male, 62, enjoys weekends away, swimming, evenings in, seeks female to share lifestyle with. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 152936 or send a text to 80361

CHEERS TO US! Well-travelled, divorced Kettering male, 63, GSOH, 6'1", medium build, enjoys the countryside, gardening and long drives, would like to meet a tall, slim, attractive lady, for future happiness. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 153644

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FRIENDSHIP FIRST! Widower, 68, retired lorry driver, enjoys playing golf, socialising, meals in/out, looking for a nice lady to spend time with. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 151028 or send a text to 80361

MAKE A LIFE TOGETHER Active, educated Wellingborough male, 68, 5'6", N/5, likes holidays, social drinks, dining out, music and history, looking for a lady, age 60-67, for companionship and maybe more in the future. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 159306 or send a text to 80361

FUN SEEKER Fun-loving, friendly, 44 year old male, would like to meet a male for fun, and a possible relationship. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 167710 or send a text to 80361

SERIOUS ABOUT A RELATIONSHIP? Genuine, caring, 47 year old gay Northampton male, short hair, brown eyes, 5'9". Would like to meet a like-minded, professional gay male aged 50-69 for a long term, serious relationship. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 164140 or send a text to 80361

FUN AND LAUGHTER Friendly, honest, straight-forward, 59 year old Northampton male, 5'8", would like to meet a local like-minded male, for fun friendship and maybe more. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 166971 or send a text to 80361

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GENERAL VACANCIES

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SPORT

Knill confident of survival

Assistant boss backs 'outstanding' Cobblers to stay up

FOOTBALL

Assistant manager Alan Knill is confident the Cobblers will remain in the Football League if they can replicate the level of performance they showed against Portsmouth.

Town lost 1-0 to Pompey, whose safety was ensured by Bristol Rovers' loss to Rochdale earlier in the day, when former Sixfields loanee Danny East scored after four minutes.

It means Northampton remain in the Sky Bet League Two bottom two, level on 47 points with Wycombe and Rovers, who play at Adams Park this weekend.

Just two games remain left to play - Saturday's trip to Dagenham & Redbridge and the final-day visit of Oxford United to Sixfields - and Knill is confident the team can take points from both of those games if they play like they did against Pompey.

"We've done everything in that game and I have to say I thought our performance was outstanding," said Knill.

"We're always disappointed to lose but if you're going to lose then that's how you should do it, you should keep going.

"They (Portsmouth) are the form team in the division and we've come away from

that match disappointed that we haven't got anything from them.

"It was a bad goal to concede; it made things difficult for us after that and we seem to be doing that more at home than we are away from home.

"You give the opposition something to cling on to when you do that and that's exactly what Portsmouth did. We played some good football and had some chances but it just wouldn't go for us.

"I'm confident that if we play like that in our next two games, we'll stay up."

Town created lots of goal-scoring opportunities against Portsmouth but drew a blank as their lack of a proven striker again cost them dearly.

Emile Sinclair should have headed home a first-half cross but failed to make any contact with the ball at the back post, and was substituted off during the interval.

"We wanted him to get his head on that, even if it is just the slightest contact," said Knill of the effort.

"We haven't spoken to Emile about it and something might have happened but we were expecting that to go in the back of the net.

"We had a lot of near chances and near misses and we just needed to get a good connection on one of those."



SO CLOSE Kelvin Langmead shows his frustration as a late chance goes begging against Portsmouth

PICTURE: KIRSTY EDMONDS

Saints facing hooker shortage for Quins tie

SAINTS are facing a shortage of hooker options for Friday night's Amlin Challenge Cup semi-final clash with Harlequins at Franklin's Gardens.

Ross McMillan is the only registered hooker in the first-team squad, with Dylan Hartley, Mike Haywood and Matt Williams all injured.

Hartley and Haywood have shoulder injuries and are not expected back for at least a

RUGBY UNION

couple of weeks, while Williams broke his leg in Sunday's win against London Irish.

That means Alex Waller, who has experience at hooker, could be asked to fill in should McMillan not make it through the full 80 minutes.

But there is also a lack of cover for Waller at loosehead

with his brother, Ethan, having also been forced off with an injury against Irish.

"It does leave us a bit short," said Saints boss Jim Mallinder. "Hopefully we'll get Dylan back soon, and Mikey Haywood.

"It will be another few weeks for Dylan. He won't be back this week, but he's making good progress and he might be fit for that (the Bath

game on May 2)."

Mallinder saw Saints survive a late scare against Irish last weekend before stressing the need to improve for the testing games ahead.

Saints flew into a 29-0 lead at Franklin's Gardens, only to be pegged back before securing a 36-21 success.

"The first 10 minutes of the second half was pretty good, but we got our bonus point

and then seemed to slip off," he said.

"It got a little bit squeaky and it's really disappointing. It's a game where we could have finished with a convincing win but it ended up being a little bit in the balance.

"We came back well in the end and with 14 men (after Waller was sin-binned) there was a massive scrum that was key.

"The last 10 minutes we

got that intensity back, but we need to be better when we come up against the good sides later this season. We need to be better than what we were.

"One of the big positives is that we got the five points and it is in our hands with two games to go.

"We just need to keep winning and we've got a very good chance of getting that home semi-final."